

top 10 resume pitfalls

1. **Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to 1 page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from the MIT Careers Office.
2. **Typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness. Have at least 2 people proofread your resume. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.
3. **Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a size 10 font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier.
4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. Articles (a, an, and the) can be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
5. **Not enough information.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests, and club memberships that will give employers important information. Include course titles and not numbers (avoid writing 6.001) Including volunteer experience would make you stand out as a well-rounded individual.
6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
7. **Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream "I need a job, any job!" The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her company.
8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10-12 points. Use italics and bolding strategically to emphasize key words.
9. **Too static.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.